



the WATER TAP

WASHINGTON'S DRINKING WATER NEWSLETTER

Division Launches After-Hours Emergency Hotline



Issue 39 • September 1999

Drinking water staff now available around the clock to troubleshoot drinking water emergencies and help protect the health of your customers. Call it Murphy's Law or whatever - emergencies don't just happen during business hours. Imagine:

- A midnight landslide damages your distribution system.
- You are notified on Friday evening before a three-day weekend that your repeat samples were *E. coli* positive.
- A nearby stream floods, leaving your wellhead underwater on the day after Thanksgiving.

Who can you call for technical advice? The answer is the division's new after-hours emergency hotline, with access to on-call drinking water experts who will guide you through problems like those described above.

Beginning September 1, a drinking water division staff member is now on-call after hours 365 days per year to troubleshoot emergencies after hours.

Division director Gregg Grunenfelder said this service is intended for water system operators, local health officials, laboratory operators and others who need immediate advice from state drinking water experts during emergencies.

"This service is for customers who need our technical, engineering or public health evaluation assistance after hours," he said. "While we will address citizen concerns if they call, this is not a public emergency hotline."

Individuals with concerns about their drinking water should call their water utility, their local health department or 911."

Grunenfelder emphasized this hotline is intended for after-hours emergencies only, not for problems that arise during business hours, and not for routine business.

Here's how the system will work:

- After-hours calls will be evaluated to determine the nature of the emergency.
- Calls clearly seeking routine business will be asked to call their regional office during business hours.

- The division staff person on call will be contacted to return calls dealing with emergencies.
- The staff person on call will return the call within 30 minutes.
- Callers using the emergency number during normal business hours will receive a recorded message directing them to the division regional office serving their area.

This new service was developed as one of several agency quality improvement efforts. Interviews and surveys with customers indicated a need for 24-hour emergency access to division staff.

For more information contact Bill Liechty at (360) 753-5953.



**After-Hours Hotline
for Drinking Water
Emergencies
toll free 1-877-481-4901**

Call this number after-hours when a problem:

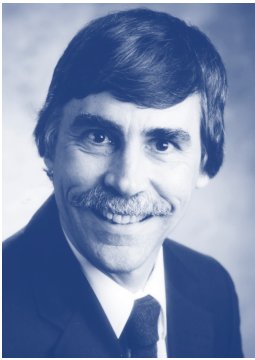
- Threatens the health of your customers or the integrity of your system;
- Can't wait until the next business day.

See the peel-off label for your rolodex card on back page of this issue.

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THE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN



The Washington State Department of Health is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 1999. In the 10 years since the department was formed to consolidate public health efforts and focus attention on public health issues and needs, we've achieved a great deal.

Our department tackles a diversity of pressing health issues. From addressing food safety and preventing tobacco use to promoting optimum childhood development and healthy aging, the Department of Health touches our lives every day.

The Division of Drinking Water has made significant progress in the past 10 years in our mission to protect the health of the people of Washington by assuring safe and reliable drinking water. Here are just a few of our many achievements since the department was formed in 1989:

- Began issuing operating permits, which allow routine tracking of compliance and reporting to local health officials on system status, and generates more than \$1 million annually.
- Conducted a statewide assessment of pesticides in more than 1,300 wells, with data used to develop a risk model that enabled the state's water systems to save \$10-15 million in testing costs for sources with low risk for contamination.
- Worked with a local and state government coalition to develop a statewide wellhead protection program to protect drinking water supplies.
- Developed the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program, which in its first two years will provide \$40 million in loans to water systems for 85 priority drinking water projects.
- Helped move 74% of water systems that had high risk unfiltered surface water sources to either filtered or ground water sources. Work continues on remaining systems.
- Developed SADIE: a database of information about all the state's public water systems, accessible to local health officials and other state agencies via the internet.
- Revised the state's major regulation of Group A public water systems, using regulatory reform principles and philosophy, with broad stakeholder participation.

Assuring safe and reliable drinking water is an on-going challenge for us all. I hope you will join us in celebrating the department's first ten years of protecting and improving the health of Washington's citizens.

Water Supply Advisory Committee Reviews Program and Reorganization

By Greg Brizendine, Chair

The proposed reorganization of the Drinking Water Program and a new evaluation of the state's regulation of water systems highlighted the quarterly meeting of the Water Supply Advisory Committee (WSAC) on July 22.

Gregg Grunenfelder, director of the Drinking Water Program, did a short presentation on objectives of proposed reorganization of the Drinking Water Program. The reorganization is being built more around the "functions" that staff perform, rather than around the specific "programs" that drive the activities of staff. Gregg stated that he wanted to have an organization that was a combination of "does basic things well" and "can react quickly to change." The latter is particularly important as we look at the schedule of new requirements under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Most of the changes will occur among staff at Olympia headquarters, but it may eventually result in some changes with regional office staffing as well. Gregg's timeline calls for further discussions with the management team, and implementation beginning by the first of October. The WSAC was very supportive of the proposal, and asked to be kept informed.

Gregg brought people up to date on the initial discussion of the Scope/Funding subcommittee in July. This subcommittee was created in April to look at what the state's regulatory program is for drinking water, what its priorities should be, and how to provide adequate resources for such a program. One focus is likely to be how the state defines and regulates Group B systems. Several WSAC members had been at the initial meeting, and offered their views on the discussion. The next subcommittee meeting, set for September 8, will probably focus on the "vision" for the state's program, and review principles developed by the WSAC in 1996 to guide the development of the program. The subcommittee will also look at new FTE figures and the new resource model being produced by the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators that will help indicate what areas of the program will need additional resources to meet future SDWA regulatory requirements.

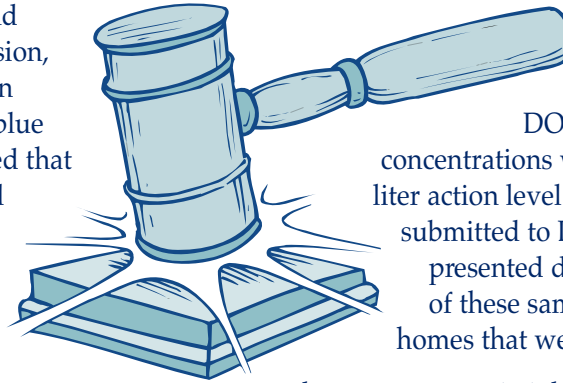
The group also had a discussion of how the program should use the new positions provided by the Legislature for conservation and reuse and the status of 2600 water systems that DOH asked to report on their Y2K readiness.

The next meeting of the WSAC will be on October 20.

Homeowners Prevail in Water System Lawsuit

A Superior Court jury awarded \$545,000 on July 28, 1999 to approximately 109 homeowners in the English Gardens Subdivision in a class action, negligence lawsuit brought against the Sound Water Company for failure to meet the requirements of the Lead and Copper Rule. Residents of this subdivision, located in the Graham-Spanaway area in Pierce County, had experienced severe blue staining on fixtures. Homeowners stated that their fixtures were severely stained, and some individuals indicated they experienced gastrointestinal distress. First draw samples in several affected homes contained copper levels exceeding 5.0 milligrams per liter.

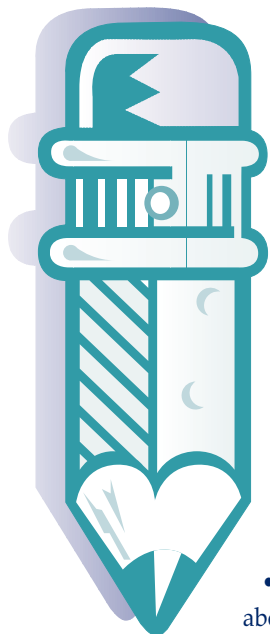
The Sound Water System was owned by the Sound Water Company until October 1997 when the assets of the company were purchased by the Rainier View Water Company. Rainier View, named in the lawsuit after it acquired the Sound assets, settled with homeowners prior to the trial according to testimony offered by Sound Water during the trial.



The plaintiffs in the lawsuit provided copies of lead and copper sampling results from 1993 that showed eight of twenty samples exceeded the copper action level.

However, these results are not in Department of Health records, and there is no evidence that they were ever submitted to DOH. Ninetieth percentile copper concentrations were below the 1.3 milligram per liter action level in two rounds of sampling submitted to DOH in 1994. However, evidence presented during the trial showed that most of these samples were collected from mobile homes that were constructed with plastic pipe.

The system exceeded the copper action level in 1995. DOH issued a compliance order to complete installation of corrosion control treatment. Rainier View completed the construction of sodium silicate addition facilities in April, 1999, and will complete the first round of follow-up sampling by October. The system is currently in compliance with other regulatory requirements.



CCR Survey Results Compiled

The DOH survey on the new Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) federal regulation that so many of you responded to is being used by the Drinking Water Program to develop the state program.

A few of the highlights from the survey results are:

- Smaller systems are more concerned about the new requirement, meeting the first report due date, and reporting a status of non-compliance than are larger systems. Larger systems, however, are more concerned with opening their records and communicating with the public.

- Smaller systems are more concerned about identifying staff help and funds to produce the report, while larger systems are

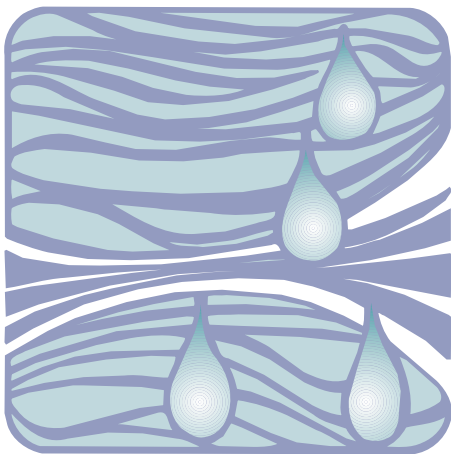
more concerned with “customer service” related issues such as designing the report to be “more readable” and answering customer’s questions.

- About 40 percent of systems responding to the survey use e-mail and the Internet.
- The Division’s newsletter, “Water Tap,” is widely read and popular among all system sizes.

You also told us what kind of assistance you would prefer to receive from the state to help you comply with this new reporting requirement. Currently, the regulation is a federal requirement under the Environmental Protection Agency. After DOH has adopted a state regulation, we will be able to focus more on offering assistance and training. Your responses will help us determine how our resources can best meet your needs.

The CCR federal regulation requires Group A community water systems to provide annually a brief, educational water quality report to people served by their system. The first annual report is due October 19. For more information, look into our homepage at www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw or call EPA at 1-800-426-4791. www.epa.gov/safewater/ccr1.html.

For questions, contact Donna Freier, (360) 236-3162 or DSF0303@doh.wa.gov.



In 1997, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Snohomish County, initiated Washington GOLD, "Guarding Our Local Drinking Water," to assist small water systems in the development of mandatory wellhead protection plans. Facilitated by a small grant from the Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement (EASI), RSVP volunteers were trained to advise and educate consumers, delineate wellhead protection areas, research wellhead history, take inventory of potential sources of contamination

Washington GOLD Offers Free Assistance to Water Systems

around wellheads, and to provide schools and service clubs with groundwater simulator demonstrations.

Since that time, close to 20 retired and senior volunteers have been trained by the Evergreen Rural Water Association of Washington to advise communities in management development and sourcewater protection. The team of Washington GOLD volunteers has hands-on experience with all aspects of the Department of Health (DOH) five-step plan for wellhead protection. So far, through their advisory role thousands of dollars have been saved for communities such as Gold Bar and King County Water District #83 in Lake Forest Park.

Group A water systems (serving less than 100 customers) are often hard pressed to afford the high fees of

contractual plans. Washington GOLD volunteers offer their services free of charge to assist in generating plans acceptable to DOH at no cost to the system other than the operator's time. RSVP is anxious to increase the number of volunteers trained to accept volunteer assignments through Washington GOLD. RSVP is actively working to get the wellhead protection message in the hands of the community through grassroots educational workshops and information distribution.

Washington Gold is an excellent resource that can make your Wellhead Protection Plan a more effective tool for "Guarding Our Local Drinking Water" in Washington. For more information contact Cydnie Hill of RSVP (425) 290-1270 or e-mail her at chill@sssc.org

Annual Drinking Water Seminar Scheduled for Fall

Are you interested in finding out about the current "hot topics" in drinking water? Do you want to know more about what you can do to keep your drinking water safe? If so, then join the Department of Health and the Washington Environmental Training Center (WETRC) at a one-day seminar covering drinking water program issues. This workshop is designed specifically to provide the essentials of the state's drinking water program focus and future direction.

Highlights of the seminar will include information on new regulations, water rights, water quality monitoring tools you can use, emergency response, and the water works operator certification program. You will also learn about success stories from the field that can help you keep your community's drinking water safe.

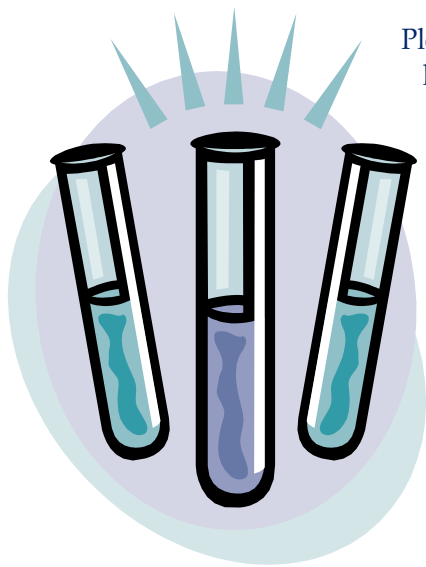
This seminar is designed for water system operators, managers, owners, and public works staff responsible for

compliance with Washington State drinking water regulations. It will also benefit local health department personnel or anyone interested in learning important up-to-date information about drinking water issues.

The seminar is being offered in three locations: October 26 in Lacey, October 28 in Mt. Vernon, and November 2 in Wenatchee. To register for this class or to obtain more information call WETRC at 1-800-562-0858 in Washington. Others call (253) 833-9111, ext. 3369.



Laboratory Certification Status Requires Review



Please make sure that the laboratory you are using to test your drinking water samples is currently certified to run the type of analysis you want done. The best way to do that is to just ask the lab if it is currently certified to run the specific tests (for example coliform bacteria, complete inorganic chemistry, VOC, SOC method 525.2).

Most of the labs that water systems have been using are still certified. However, the following two labs within Washington State have been decertified, which means that they are no longer qualified to test drinking water samples for compliance purposes:

- Orion Laboratory (lab # 102) - located in Federal Way; Decertified for coliform and inorganic chemical testing as of 8/31/98.
- Cascade Analytical Service (lab # 020) - located in Tacoma; Decertified for arsenic, chromium, selenium, beryllium, nitrate-N, turbidity, and calcium as of 8/5/98. Decertified for all inorganic chemical testing as of 5/30/99.

(NOTE: Cascade Analytical Inc. (lab # 105) - located in Wenatchee is still fully certified for inorganic chemical testing and testing of other analytes.)

The following two labs have chosen not to continue with chemical testing:

- Prezant Associates Inc (lab # 138) - located in Seattle; Not testing for lead and copper as of 2/1/99.
- Whitman Hospital and Medical Center (lab # 012) - located in Colfax; Not testing for nitrate as of 5/31/98 (but still certified for coliform bacteria tests).

If you have had a sample analyzed by any of the above labs for tests the lab wasn't certified to run during the time period the lab was not certified, please contact Linda Roach of the Drinking Water Certification Program at 206-361-2944.

Free Workshops for Very Small System Needs

Learn all you need to know about operating a small water system by attending a free workshop this fall.

The workshops are recommended for Local Health Jurisdictions, very Small Group A Community Ground Water Systems serving 100 or less connections, and non-transient, non-community (NTNC) water systems. These workshops are targeting these very small systems because they will be required to have a certified operator by the year 2001. The workshops are the precursor to possible future mandatory training for very small system operators and is being used as a test case/ pilot study for such future training. However, all small system operators can benefit from the training.

The workshops are free, however, advance registration is required. Some of the registration sites have limited seating capacity. Lunch and training material from this workshop will be provided to all registered attendees. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) will be offered.

The Seventeen "Need to Know" workshops are being sponsored across the state by Washington State Department of Health (DOH) in partnership with Evergreen Rural Water of Washington (ERWOW), Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), Pacific Northwest Section of American Water Works Association (PNWS-AWWA) Small System Committee, and Washington Environmental Training Center (WETRC).

See the Training Calendar on page 6 for dates and locations of the Workshops.

For questions on the Need to Know Workshops contact:

Lisa Raysby, P.E. at (360) 236-3147,
FAX (360) 236-2252, e-mail: lar0303@doh.wa.gov

The workshops are free but advance registration is required. Call Evergreen Rural Water of Washington at (509) 962-6326.



To register call these contacts...

ERWOW

Evergreen Rural Water
of Washington
1-509-962-6326

<http://www.erwow.org>

WETRC

Washington Environmental
Training Center
1-800-562-0858

www.ivygreen.ctc.edu/wetrc/

Training and Education Calendar Oct. - Nov. 1999

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Oct 4-6	Joint Conference on Health – Kay DeRoos	Spokane	206-362-4728
Oct 4-16	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Course	Vancouver	WETRC
Oct 5-8	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Course	Auburn	WETRC
Oct 6	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Yakima	ERWOW
Oct 7-8	Fall Extravaganza 1 1/2 Day Conference	Mt Vernon	ERWOW
Oct 12-13	Cross Connection Control Program Manager’s Course	Mt Vernon	ERWOW
Oct 12-14	Pump Operation and Maintenance	Auburn	WETRC
Oct 12	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Med. Lake	ERWOW
Oct 13	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Colville	ERWOW
Oct 15	AC Pipe Work Practice Procedure	Auburn	WETRC
Oct 18	Backflow Assembly Tester Refresher Course	Auburn	WETRC
Oct 19	Backflow Assembly Tester Professional Growth Exam	Auburn	WETRC
Oct 20-22	Basic Electrical	Auburn	WETRC
Oct 26	Drinking Water Program Issues 1999-2000: Current Focus and Future Directions	Lacey	WETRC
Oct 26-28	Chlorination System Operation and Maintenance	Tacoma	WETRC
Oct 26-29	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Course	Auburn	WETRC
Oct 27	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Aberdeen	ERWOW
Oct 28	Drinking Water Program Issues 1999-2000: Current Focus and Future Directions	Mt Vernon	WETRC
Oct 28	Cross-Connection Seminar - WWCCPPGroup	Fife	206-233-2633
Oct 29	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Carson	ERWOW
Nov 2	Drinking Water Program Issues 1999-2000: Current Focus and Future Directions	Wenatchee	WETRC
Nov 2-3	Backflow Assembly Tester Troubleshooting and Repair	Auburn	WETRC
Nov 3-5	IACC Conf.-Infrastructure Financing - John LaRocque	Wenatchee	360-586-2523
Nov 5	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Silverdale	ERWOW
Nov 6	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Camano Is	ERWOW
Nov 8	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Pt Angeles	ERWOW
Nov 9	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Whidby Is	ERWOW
Nov 10	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Fri. Harbor	ERWOW
Nov 12	Chlorination Treatment Techniques	Ritzville	ERWOW
Nov 15	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Kelso	ERWOW
Nov 16	Backflow Assembly Tester Refresher Course	Richland	WETRC
Nov 16-19	Backflow Assembly Tester Certification Course	Auburn	WETRC
Nov 17	Backflow Assembly Tester Professional Growth Exam	Richland	WETRC
Nov 17	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Mossyrock	ERWOW
Nov 18	Backflow Assembly Tester Refresher Course	Auburn	WETRC
Nov 18	Flow Control Valves (AWWA Subsection) Tim Fulton	Bremerton	360-753-8362
Nov 19	Chlorination Treatment Techniques	Wenatchee	ERWOW
Nov 19	Backflow Assembly Tester Professional Growth Exam	Richland	WETRC
Nov 19	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Bonney Lk	ERWOW
Nov 22	Backflow Assembly Tester Refresher Course	Auburn	WETRC
Nov 23	Backflow Assembly Tester Professional Growth Exam	Auburn	WETRC
Nov 29	Backflow Assembly Tester Refresher Course	Auburn	WETRC
Nov 30	Backflow Assembly Tester Professional Growth Exam	Auburn	WETRC
Nov 30	“Need to Know” Training for Small Water Systems*	Wal. Walla	ERWOW

*Indicates training is less than \$25.00

For the complete Training Calendar (thru June 2000) visit the Drinking Water Homepage & click on Training - www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw

Tap Tips...

Summer/Fall Coliform Monitoring

We see an increase in monitoring violations in summer and fall because people sometimes leave on vacation without collecting their monthly coliform sample or they get “too busy.” Please remember that most bacteriological water quality problems occur in the summer and fall, so it is especially important to sample in these months. Other ideas about coliform monitoring:

Sample early in the month! Then if you get an unsatisfactory sample, you have time to collect repeat samples in the same month. If there is a problem with sample delivery, you would still have time to submit another sample.

Routine coliform samples must be collected from your distribution system after the first service connection. They cannot be collected from your well, spring, storage tank, or pump house.

If you get an unsatisfactory sample, DO NOT shock chlorinate before collecting repeat samples! The purpose of collecting repeats is to identify the source of contamination in your system. If you shock chlorinate before collecting repeats, you may mask the problem temporarily - but it may come back, and the health of your customers may be threatened.

Avoid the frost-free kind of taps if possible. Sampling from this kind of tap could result in a false positive since bacteria may be able to grow inside of them.

If you need assistance with follow-up to a coliform positive sample, call your regional office.

Dr. Drip

Dear Dr. Drip:

I get this burning feeling in my stomach when the mail comes and another bundle of multicolored papers from DOH is lying there addressed to my water system. With the best intentions, I start to wade through the material.

However, sometime after the page that starts “Dear Water System Operator,” my eyes start to water, my head hurts and I put the whole pile of papers aside hoping that it will make more sense later. Why can’t they just tell me what it is I have to do and how to do it in plain English?!

Sincerely, O. V. Welm



Dear O.V.

Water system operators have told us how frustrated they get trying to keep track of the Group A SDWA water quality monitoring requirements. They feel the regulations are complicated, always changing, and the list of monitoring requirements seems to expand every few years. They are right; the rules are complicated and they do change just when you think you have figured them out.

DOH is trying to reduce some of that frustration. We are in the process of building a report to be sent to every water system each fall outlining, in plain and simple language, what the system's monitoring requirements will be for the next 12 months. The report will include information about all types of water quality monitoring, monthly list of the required tests, basic information about waivers, and the name and phone number of a regional contact to help with questions and corrections. We anticipate that this short two-page report will be updated yearly and mailed to systems each fall.

Currently we are testing a draft of the report. Part of the testing includes a review by a group of small water system volunteers and operators. We expect to have our first edition ready to go by late October of this year. The report will cover the calendar year 2000 (January through December). In this first year it will be sent to all Group A community and non-community non-transient water systems.

Our bottom line is simple: We need a short summary of a water system's basic water quality monitoring requirements. And it must be one that can be understood by “normal folks” who just happen to run a water system. This report won't tell you everything about your water system but it should go a long way to reduce some of the noise and confusion surrounding monitoring.

Boil Water Advisory Issued for White Salmon

The Department of Health issued a boil water advisory in late July to the city of White Salmon in Klickitat County. Recent tests showed the presence of two disease-causing organisms in the source water, in addition to concerns about turbidity in the water supply all winter and spring. While the city chlorinates its water, the organisms, *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*, are both resistant to chlorine.



Division director Gregg Grunenfelder said the actions taken in White Salmon are part of the division’s efforts to evaluate the status of all surface water supplies and determine the risks they pose to public health. White Salmon is one of 155 Washington water systems supplied by surface water.

Department and city officials agreed advising White Salmon water system customers to boil their water and take other precautions is the best way to ensure their health is protected. No illnesses related to the city’s drinking water have been reported. However, several hundred illnesses caused by *Giardia* are reported in Washington each year, and *Cryptosporidium* in drinking water was the cause of a 1993 outbreak in Milwaukee that caused over 400,000 illnesses.

City officials are pursuing development of a new source of drinking water, using ground water rather than surface water, expected to be in use by Spring 2000. The advisory will likely remain in effect until then.

In This Issue:

The following people have contributed to the production of this issue of the Water Tap:

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